

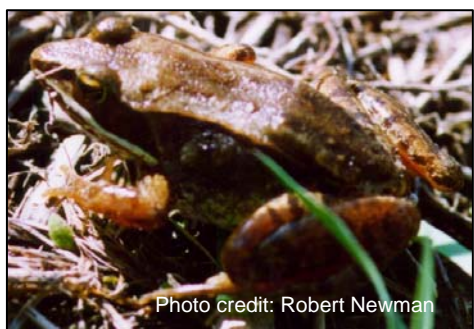
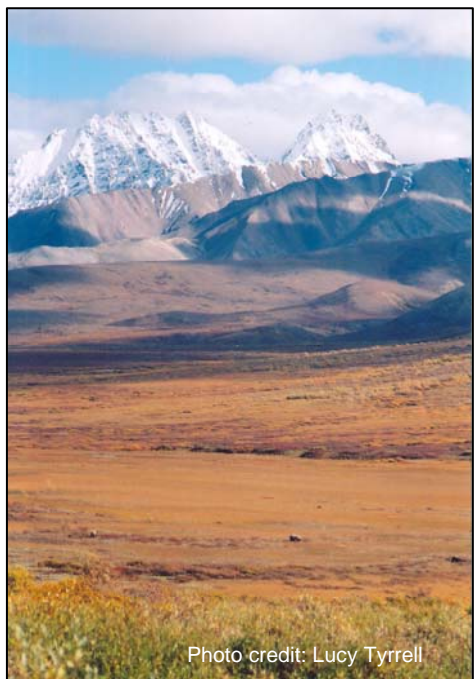
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Murie Science and Learning Center
Denali National Park and Preserve



Discover Denali Research Fellowship Program

2008 Grant Application Instructions and Guidelines



**A grant program of the Murie Science and Learning Center
offered in partnership between the
Denali Education Center and the National Park Service**

*The goal of the Discover Denali Research Fellowship Program
is to support scientific research that assists park managers in making informed decisions
about the natural and cultural resources at Denali National Park and Preserve.*

Background

Many complex issues threaten the integrity of natural ecosystems, cultural resources, and visitor experiences at national parks including Denali National Park and Preserve. Denali has recently completed a draft of a Resource Stewardship Strategy which identified gaps in resource knowledge and areas in which indicators need to be developed to protect and maintain unimpaired the quality of park resources and visitor experiences. Research in these areas will help park managers understand these challenges and make decisions based on scientifically credible information. Research is one important tool used by the National Park Service to meet its stewardship responsibilities.

To encourage scientific and scholarly research that addresses management issues, the National Park Service and the Denali Education Center established the Discover Denali Research Fellowship Program through the Murie Science and Learning Center (MSLC), located in Denali National Park and Preserve. This fellowship program is made possible through proceeds from Discover Denali, an MSLC program developed jointly by the Denali Education Center and the National Park Service. Discover Denali, the program that gives both its name and funding to the research fellowship program, helps Royal Celebrity tour participants learn about Denali's natural and human history.

The Denali Education Center seeks to connect people to Denali through research, education, and communication. The Murie Science and Learning Center was established in the spirit of the Natural Resource Challenge, a National Park Service initiative aimed at increasing research and education efforts in our national parks.

Research fellows will provide research or scholarship to address issues of importance to park managers, and will also share their research with others through a public lecture and another form of outreach activity/product.

A typical fellowship grant is expected to be \$3,500; however, grant requests of up to \$5,000 will be considered. The fellowship program supports field research in the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences. Project requests are more likely to be successful if they address topics that that will help park managers tackle management issues.

Eligibility

The Discover Denali Research Fellowship Program supports field research in the Denali National Park and Preserve area. The fellowship program is open to undergraduate and graduate students, college and university faculty, state and federal agency scientists, and private-sector researchers. Research fellows must be self-directed individuals whose work will contribute to the scientific knowledge of the natural and cultural resources of Denali.

Funds may be used for a variety of purposes including salary support; room, board, and travel directly associated with fieldwork; supplies; and analytical costs. Requests for permanent equipment are not encouraged but will be considered; any permanent equipment purchased with fellowship funds remains the property of the National Park Service and will be returned to the park at the end of the yearly funding cycle. Fellowship funds cannot be used for tuition, fringe benefits, institutional overhead, thesis preparation, publication of results, or costs associated with attendance at professional meetings.

Recipients may apply for a Discover Denali Research Fellowship in subsequent years, but project proposals will be evaluated independently of the previous year's work. Projects need not have matching funds, but collaborative projects are encouraged.

Opportunities for Research

Ecosystems in Denali National Park and Preserve range from lowland boreal forests and riverine systems to sub-alpine scrub vegetation, alpine tundra, and high alpine snowfields and glaciers. Denali has more than 750 species of vascular plants, 39 species of mammals, including grizzly and black bear, caribou, moose, wolf, Dall's sheep, wolverine, lynx, and red fox, 165 species of birds, 15 species of fish, and one species of amphibian.

Denali offers vast, relatively unmodified landscapes in which to study such topics as glaciers, rivers, air quality, fire effects, visitor experiences, subsistence harvests, traditional and ecological knowledge, and the effects of climate change on physical and biological resources and on landscapes.

Denali has several hundred layers or themes in its extensive Geographic Information System (GIS) database (e.g., hydrology, elevation, soils, and landcover) that can be used to build composite information about potential study sites or to model habitat suitability. For assistance with GIS needs, please contact Jon_Paynter@nps.gov.

A list of research desired or needed by Denali managers, including topics with existing data to utilize, is posted at <http://www.nps.gov/dena/> (Information for Researchers). Also on the website is information about Denali's Resource Stewardship Strategy (RSS) being finalized in early 2008, including a draft of the 19 strategies and 99 projects that will provide focus for the research, resource, and science education programs at Denali for the next two decades. Discussions with park staff about your project are encouraged to maximize its value to managers. Contact Lucy_Tyrrell@nps.gov to learn about appropriate staff to contact.

Special Research Considerations

Denali is primarily a pristine wilderness park. Its six million acres provide outstanding research opportunities in landscape settings. Researchers have responsibilities to adhere to laws protecting wilderness, follow Leave-No-Trace guidelines, and consider wilderness values in making minimal impacts in all aspects of research.

Travel in Denali must be planned in advance. Backcountry travel may be arduous and time-consuming. Projects that do not require helicopter access or special travel permits on the Park Road are more favored. Shuttle buses travel along the 90-mile Park Road from mid-May to mid-September, providing researcher access to sites along the road corridor. Researchers could apply fellowship funds toward the shuttle bus fees. Park entrance fees are waived for research fellowship recipients. Limited housing is available inside the park and outside the park. Requests for backcountry camping permits and for use of cabins or campgrounds should be incorporated into the research proposal.

By request, research fellows will be able to use Murie Science and Learning Center and Denali Education Center facilities for guest researchers (e.g., work space, computer access, lecture space, and housing as available).

To facilitate project administration and coordination, a park staff member will be assigned as a research liaison to each research fellow.

Provisional Acceptance Pending Research Permit

For those Discover Denali Research Fellows who propose to conduct fieldwork within Denali, acceptance in the Fellowship Program is provisional until a Research and Collecting Permit is issued to the recipient. Initial acceptance as a Fellow is NOT A GUARANTEE that a research and collecting permit will be issued for work in Denali. Modification of methods or sites may be necessary. Information on applying to conduct research in Denali or any national park may be found at the NPS website <http://science.nature.nps.gov/research> and can be viewed at anytime. Discover Denali fellows intending to work within Denali must submit an application for a research and collecting permit no later than March 1, 2008 or at least 3 months prior to the anticipated start of the project in the park whichever is earlier. Prior to issuing a permit, park staff reviews the project for compliance with wilderness and park policies and administrative concerns—is the research study appropriate for Denali?

Requirements of Award Winners

Each fellow is required to provide the following within 6 months of field work (except where noted or arranged):

- A talk at the Denali Education Center (or other venue as agreed to) **during the “summer” season** in conjunction with the field project (plans for study, observations so far, similar projects already completed)
- Educational outreach such as a public involvement in research, poster, fact sheet, hi-tech or classroom activity to share the research process and the results (see flier with ideas at www.nps.gov/dena)
- Provide electronic final report (summary or abstract, intro, methods, results, discussion, literature cited)
- Send several digital jpg or tif photos of researcher/field work in progress (with captions)
- Provide a brief summary of research results using the “Sharing Research” format (format will be provided) Sharing Research and photos may be used in brochures or fact sheets.

Discover Denali Research Fellowship recipients must fulfill all conditions of the park research permit (e.g., submit an Investigator's Annual Report and a final report or thesis, and comply with curatorial guidelines for collections).

Important Dates

For 2008 fellowships, the deadline for applications is February 1. Awards will be announced soon after March 1. Field work must begin within a reasonable time after receipt of the fellowship (usually prior to September 1, 2008). However, exceptions may be appropriate and should be discussed with the Discover Denali administrator (see contact information below). Educational outreach, final report, photos, and brief summaries are due *within six months after the completion of field work*. Awards will be disbursed in two payments: 60 percent at the outset of the field work (on approval of research and collecting permit if in Denali), and the remaining 40 percent when all specified project deliverables have been received at Denali.

Application Process

Individuals wishing to apply for the Discover Denali Research Fellowship must submit (electronically) to the program research administrator listed at the bottom of this page the following documents in MS Word (.doc) format:

- A completed application cover sheet that can be downloaded from the following website
<http://www.nps.gov/dena>
- A research proposal that contains the following sections, with headings:
 - (1) Project title } no more than 1500 words in total for these sections
 - (2) Research objectives or questions }
 - (3) Methods including data analysis }
 - (4) Requests for logistical help or park equipment
(e.g., housing at Headquarters or in cabins along the Park Road, camping in the backcountry or in campsites, temporary work or storage space, road access by private vehicle)
 - (5) Project budget for funds received (including any matching funds received or anticipated)
 - (6) Project timeline, including tentative schedule for fieldwork in Denali
 - (7) Annotated list of project deliverables (see Requirements above)
- A basic curriculum vitae or resume that lists research experience, published papers, presentations, etc.
- If applicable (student), a letter of support from an academic advisor or principal investigator

Proposals will be evaluated by a scientific panel based on the following criteria. Criteria are listed in order of their value to the selection.

- (1) Significance of the project to park management issues or resources
 - (high priority) Does it help managers make decisions about critical resource issues?
 - (medium) Does it provide missing resource information or help set targets for indicators of desired resource condition?
 - (low) Does it provide other information about Denali resources?
- (2) Scientific or scholarly merit of the proposal (Are the study questions and methods clear?)
- (3) Feasibility and scope of work (Can it be done in the timeframe suggested?)
- (4) Novelty of project—
 - (most preferred) Is the research a new project?
 - (preferred) Is it a new angle on an old project?
 - (least preferred) Is it a continuation of an existing project?
- (5) Demonstrated ability of the investigator to carry out the proposed research
 - What experience or credentials prepare the applicant to do this research?

Contact information

Ask questions and submit proposals for Discover Denali Research Fellowship Program to
[Lucy Tyrrell@nps.gov](mailto:Lucy_Tyrrell@nps.gov) (907)-683-6352